

I encourage the association to wait until the end of the consultation process, as I encourage the Hon. Member, when those decisions will be taken.

REFUNDABLE SALES TAX CREDIT

Miss Aideen Nicholson (Trinity): Mr. Speaker, a refundable sales tax credit is useful only if it is timely and if it is adequate. Can the Minister guarantee that in such a case a refundable sales tax credit would not be a matter whereby people starve for six months and then get an inadequate credit?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I can give the Hon. Member absolute assurance. I have said time and time again that a refundable sales tax credit will be paid in advance of the needs of the individual receiving the credit. It will be paid regularly, and whether it is monthly or quarterly is something that is still subject to consultation. The sales tax credit will vary. The size will vary depending on what is in the sales tax base.

These are matters about which we will consult and about which we have been consulting. We also look forward to the conclusions to which the Finance Committee might come.

Mr. Speaker: A single question by the Hon. Member for Skeena.

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EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

NICARAGUA—VIEWS ATTRIBUTED TO UNITED STATES SENATE REPUBLICAN LEADER

Mr. Jim Fulton (Skeena): Mr. Speaker, my question is a serious one. It is addressed to the Secretary of State for External Affairs. I am sure that he is aware by now that the Senate Republican Leader, Bob Dole, has confirmed that he was serious about his remarks regarding a "little three-day invasion of Nicaragua and the assassination of the President of Nicaragua". Will the Right Hon. Minister take this opportunity to distance Canada firmly and formally from any such views regarding the assassination of any political leader in the western hemisphere?

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I will not get involved in a domestic debate in the United States. Our view on the question of Central America differs markedly from that of the United States. That difference is well known.

Point of Order—Mrs. Finestone

POINT OF ORDER

ALLEGED FAILURE TO COMPLY WITH PROVISIONS OF S. O. 99(2)

Mrs. Sheila Finestone (Mount Royal): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I am asking Your Honour for a ruling on the Government's response to the fifth and sixth reports of the House Standing Committee on Communications and Culture which I believe is in breach of Standing Order 99(2).

I am a member of that committee. I first brought this issue to the attention of the House over one week ago, but I deferred to a request by the office of the Deputy House Leader and by Your Honour to await the presence of the Minister of Communications (Miss MacDonald) before proceeding. I welcome the Minister here today. I will proceed as Your Honour requested.

By way of background, the fifth and sixth reports of the House Standing Committee on Communications and Culture were tabled in the House on April 28 and May 6, 1987, respectively. These two reports contain more than 150 pages of carefully analysed documents and 107 separate recommendations. These reports represent countless hours of preparation by our committee and by members of our staff. They reflect the many hours that we took to hear hundreds of witnesses and to read many hundreds of pages of briefs from various business organizations and public and private institutions, as well as many concerned citizens.

In response to these in-depth reports tabled in the House by the standing committee under our dedicated chairman, the Hon. Member for Edmonton South (Mr. Edwards), the Minister of Communications provided the Government's response in the form of a simple four and one-half page reply—I would suggest a smoke-screen, cynical response to cover a lack of action.

There is nothing in the Standing Orders of the House which allow the Government to provide a partial response to the reports of a committee. Standing Order 99(2) states:

Within 150 days of the presentation of a report from a standing or special committee, the government shall, upon the request of the committee, table a comprehensive response thereto.

Your Honour will note that that Standing Order is drafted in mandatory terms—"the Government shall—table a comprehensive response". The Government is obliged to do so as long as the committee has requested such a comprehensive response.

Our committee has specifically made such a request. You will note, Mr. Speaker, that on the final page of each of the committee's two reports in question there appears these words: "The Committee requests that the Government provide a comprehensive response to this report in accordance with the provisions of Standing Order 99(2)".

It is apparent that in approving this particular Standing Order Parliament attached considerable weight to the mandatory nature of the Government's obligations and to the